

1987 Annual Report

Harris County Juvenile Probation Department

"I was in so much trouble I didn't think I could ever turn
it around. Then, the judge put me on probation . . ."



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About the Illustrations

This Report was illustrated by a 16-year-old boy on probation.

In trouble since he was 13, Paul was sent to stay at Burnett-Bayland Home where we learned of his special artistic talent. He did well at Burnett-Bayland and earned an early release, serving the remainder of his probationary term at home.

At the time of this printing, Paul has completed his probation and hopes to turn his talent into a rewarding career. We thank Paul for volunteering to work with our report production team. We believe his illustrations add feeling and insight, helping us explain what this work is all about.

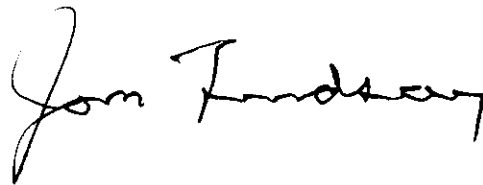
Paul has become our special friend and we wish him all the best.

To the Citizens of Harris County

The pace and pressure of growing up in today's complex society present challenges to our youth, particularly those whose environment and lifestyles put them at high risk for trouble.

At the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, skilled practitioners team up with citizen volunteers to work with our most troubled youth. Going the extra mile to put a young life back on track, these dedicated people exemplify the meaning of public service.

The community that provides well for all its children makes the best possible investment in its future. In Harris County, our commitment to children through the Juvenile Probation Department is surely one of our wisest investments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Lindsay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jon Lindsay
Harris County Judge

*"I was always scared and
depressed. On the streets a
girl gets money two ways:
dope and prostitution."
Donna, age 16*



When a Child Breaks the Law

When a child breaks the law, he may introduce himself and his family to a whole new world of procedures, places and people who make up the juvenile justice system.

Last year, nearly 18,000 Harris County children ages 10 to 17 became involved with this system. Hundreds of skilled practitioners and citizen volunteers worked to redirect their young lives. These people make up the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.

On the Streets

Not all children who break the law are street kids, but most live lifestyles which put them at high risk for trouble.

Over 7,000 Harris County youngsters run away from home each year. More than 20,000 students drop out of school, and even more latch-key children spend hours each day and night on their own.

These and other unsupervised children on our streets are easily exploited by adults dealing in drugs, prostitution and pornography. It is estimated that over half of all runaways begin supporting themselves through criminal activity after two weeks on the streets.

Life on the streets is tough for adults. It's even tougher for children.

Getting Caught

When a child is caught breaking the law, he may be picked up by officers from any of the more than 50 law enforcement agencies in Harris County. Depending on circumstances, the child may be returned home or brought to one of the intake units of the Juvenile Probation Department.

Being apprehended may be all the corrective action necessary for many young offenders. It emphasizes the serious consequences of illegal activity and can cause great distress and inconvenience to the child and family. In some cases, serious discussions with police and probation officers may be enough to convince everyone involved that the youngster is not likely to make the same mistake again.

Who Are These Children?

Although each child is unique, young offenders share some common characteristics. These similarities can provide clues to delinquent behavior and direct our approach to the problem.

The children brought in by the police come from all racial and economic backgrounds and from all parts of Harris County. Roughly two-thirds are male. About 80 percent of their offenses are misdemeanors. The most common offense is runaway.

Young offenders usually have low self-esteem and self-discipline. They have little tolerance for frustration, boredom and authority. Classroom

problems are very common, both behavioral and academic. These children are more likely to drop out of school.

Although many live in happy, secure homes, most have significant family problems such as marital instability, economic stress, chemical addiction and family abuse. Through their disruptive behavior, young offenders often sound the alarm for a whole family in trouble.

Front Door to the System

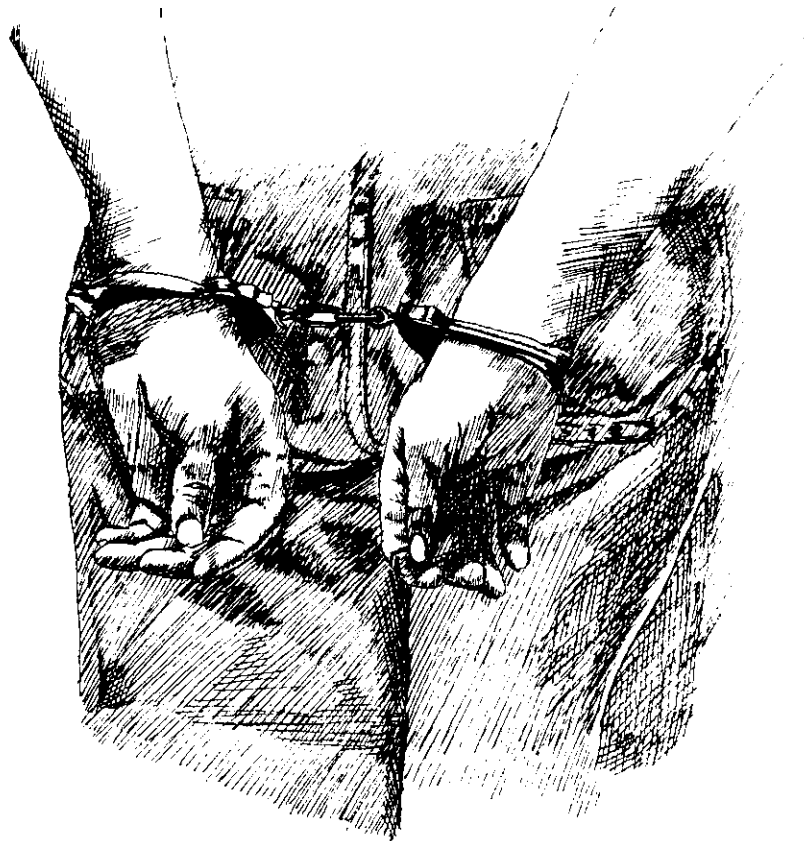
The intake process is sometimes called the front door to the juvenile justice system. Here, all incoming cases are either screened out or admitted for further action.

Just as many children and families need the intervention of juvenile authorities, many do not. Knowing the difference is crucial to the success of the entire system.

Not all children referred to the Probation Department are physically brought in, but when that is necessary, the Department's two intake units are open around the clock to receive children.

"When I was picked up by the police they put handcuffs on me. It was really embarrassing in the store for people to see me. I was afraid I wouldn't see my parents again."

—Larry, age 16



Often in handcuffs, they arrive in police cars day and night. They may be sick, injured, intoxicated or severely upset. Some very important decisions must be made on the spot.

Who Is This Child?

The child brought in by police is usually a total stranger to intake staff. They must get to know him quickly in order to initiate a course of action which will either divert the child from the juvenile justice system or start his case on the proper track through the system.

Intake officers must learn many things about the child. Is he in an immediate crisis? Does he need medical or psychological first aid? How serious are the charges against him and has he been in trouble before? Is he a threat to himself or others? Who and where is his family?

To answer these questions, legal, medical and psychiatric specialists may assist. Intake diversion officers review cases to spot children who can be returned home safely or referred to other community agencies.

Within a few hours, staff and volunteers have gathered the information needed to make some important decisions. They may decide to counsel the child and family or refer them to more appropriate service agencies and close the case.

However, if it looks as if charges will be filed against the child, intake staff determines where the child will stay until his court hearing.

Waiting for Court

Most children stay at home until court, but some stay in the Juvenile Detention Center. Whether at home or in detention, this is a time of uncertainty for the child and family.

A court officer is assigned to each case filed in court. The officer will maintain frequent contact with the child and family, assisting them through the judicial process ahead. By explaining the system and answering their questions, the officer will alleviate many fears.

The primary task of the court officer is to develop a more thorough assessment of the child and his circumstances for the court. All pertinent infor-

mation is recorded in a comprehensive report to assist the judge in making the best possible disposition.

Court investigations may involve in-person and telephone interviews, home and school visits, and where indicated, special testing. If the officer discovers serious problems facing the child or family, other service agencies may be contacted for assistance. When it appears that removal from the home may be considered by the judge, the Department's Placement Unit will develop a list of appropriate residential facilities for the court's consideration.

In Detention

Children are held in the Juvenile Detention Center for their own protection, the protection of the community, or to assure their appearance in court.

The thought of being locked in a security facility can be frightening at first, but children soon find they are in the care of highly trained staff and volunteers who understand and care about them. In fact, they are staying in one of the finest centers of its kind. In 1987 the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges named this Detention Center the most outstanding in the nation.

The incoming child first stays in the Center's Assessment Unit with other newly admitted children. Here, medical, psychological and casework staff learn more about the child before selecting the ten-bed living unit in which he will be most compatible. The Psychological and Social Services Unit provides crisis intervention and short-term counseling where needed. A registered nurse and physician take care of physical exams and medical care.

The child in detention keeps a busy routine of recreation, education and counseling. At intervals set by law, children have detention hearings in the Center's courtroom. Children are not detained without due process of law.

Going to Court

When the day for the child's court hearing arrives, he and his parents appear before a judge in one of the three district courts which hear delinquency cases. The child's attorney and an assistant district attorney are present, as are the child's court officer and any other parties pertinent to the case.

By law, juvenile proceedings are civil, not criminal. The primary goal of the juvenile justice system is to rehabilitate children, not punish them. At the same time, the judge must protect the community.

*"If I had a little brother, I
would tell him to listen to
my parents and not hang
around with bad
friends."*

—Sherry, age 16



If the judge determines that the child has engaged in delinquent conduct, he reviews the court officer's report to help make the best decision for the child.

Considering the Alternatives

When a child is found delinquent, the judge considers a wide range of dispositional alternatives. Under new Texas law the court's options have been expanded to allow a determinate sentence which could result in incarceration for up to 30 years. Under specific circumstances, serious offenders 15 and over can be waived from the juvenile system to stand trial as adults.

Between the extremes of lengthy incarceration and simple dismissal, there exists a host of alternatives for the judge to consider. From probation at home to placement in a foster home or residential treatment center, the judge selects the option he feels most likely to provide rehabilitation for the child and safety for the community.

A Second Chance

Some young, first offenders are offered a special opportunity — a second chance to avoid a juvenile record and probation. In Harris County, that second chance is called Informal Adjustment.

Informal Adjustment offers a non-judicial alternative for appropriate children. The child agrees to participate in a voluntary six-month program of supervision and counseling. Staff and trained volunteers work closely with the child and family in what is one of the Department's most rewarding programs. On completion of Informal Adjustment, the case may be dismissed entirely.

The Most-Used Option

Of all the options available to the courts, the one most used is field probation supervision. Every year, over 1,500 children are placed on probation in the community. Since they remain in their homes and schools, probation offers the least costly, least disruptive alternative for children in trouble.

Probation means a change in lifestyle that few children welcome at first. New rules set by the court include regular school or work attendance, curfews, respectful and lawful conduct, restricted contact with undesirable peers and participation in specified educational, therapeutic or restitution programs offered through the Probation Department.

From neighborhood offices throughout the County, probation officers and volunteers supervise young probationers and work with their families. They see that court-ordered rules of probation are obeyed. Acting as role models and counselors, they provide positive alternatives and support to the child and family.

The Department's many diagnostic, educational and therapeutic resources help identify the source of trouble in a child's life so they, with their families, can build a better law-abiding future together.

The Essential Family

Parents are expected to participate in their child's probation program. As the primary source of social, emotional and financial support of children, the family is an essential element in a successful probation experience. Probation officers work to strengthen the family by restoring control and confidence to

parents. Family counseling, parent training and support groups offer parents new skills and insights into the demands of raising teenagers today.

Probation Works!

Fortunately, the majority of children succeed on probation. Last year, 80 percent successfully completed their terms. Many participated in special restitution programs making important contributions to the community and developing a new sense of self-worth. Special education and tutoring gave many of these children a better chance at academic and vocational success, and ultimately, a better chance at life.

Staying Away From Home

Occasionally the court will remove a child from his home due to the child's uncontrolled behavior, special medical or psychiatric problems requiring hospitalization, or due to an unsuitable home environment. A variety of public and private facilities are used to provide residential care for young offenders who are emotionally disturbed, chemically dependent and mentally retarded. The Texas Youth Commission facilities are used for some of the most serious offenders.

The Juvenile Probation Department operates two residential facilities for Harris County's delinquent children. They are Burnett-Bayland Home and the Harris County Youth Village. Beyond offering the best possible child care, staff at these two institutions seek to provide a turning point in the child's life which will enable a successful return to family, school and community.

Being sent to live in an institution away from home is never an ideal situation. Children and their families have many concerns, most of which will be relieved during orientation.

Whether the child is sent to Burnett-Bayland or the Youth Village, he can be assured of the best possible child care in an environment which facilitates positive mental and physical growth.

Both institutions offer therapeutic, educational and recreational programs as part of their holistic approach to redirecting the lives of their residents. At both facilities, incentive programs are used to reward positive behavioral changes and participation of family and community volunteers is encouraged.

Whether a child stays at Burnett-Bayland and attends school in the community, or at the Youth Village where the Houston Independent School District operates a school on campus, he can expect a positive environment with caring staff eager to prepare him and his family for a successful return home.

Starting Over

The child who has completed his probation period at home or in a residential facility, has cause to celebrate. His case is closed, special court-ordered restrictions are removed and he has an opportunity to start over.

We believe most children leave the Juvenile Probation Department better equipped to live as productive, law-abiding members of our community. We believe they have a greater sense of self-worth and responsibility. We believe in the potential for good in every child and that they are worthy of our best efforts.

But our efforts alone will not be sufficient. These children, as all other children, will require the support of a family and a community committed to the educational, emotional, physical and moral welfare of its children.



“When I reflect on the work we do here, I often think of it as a business of tiny miracles.

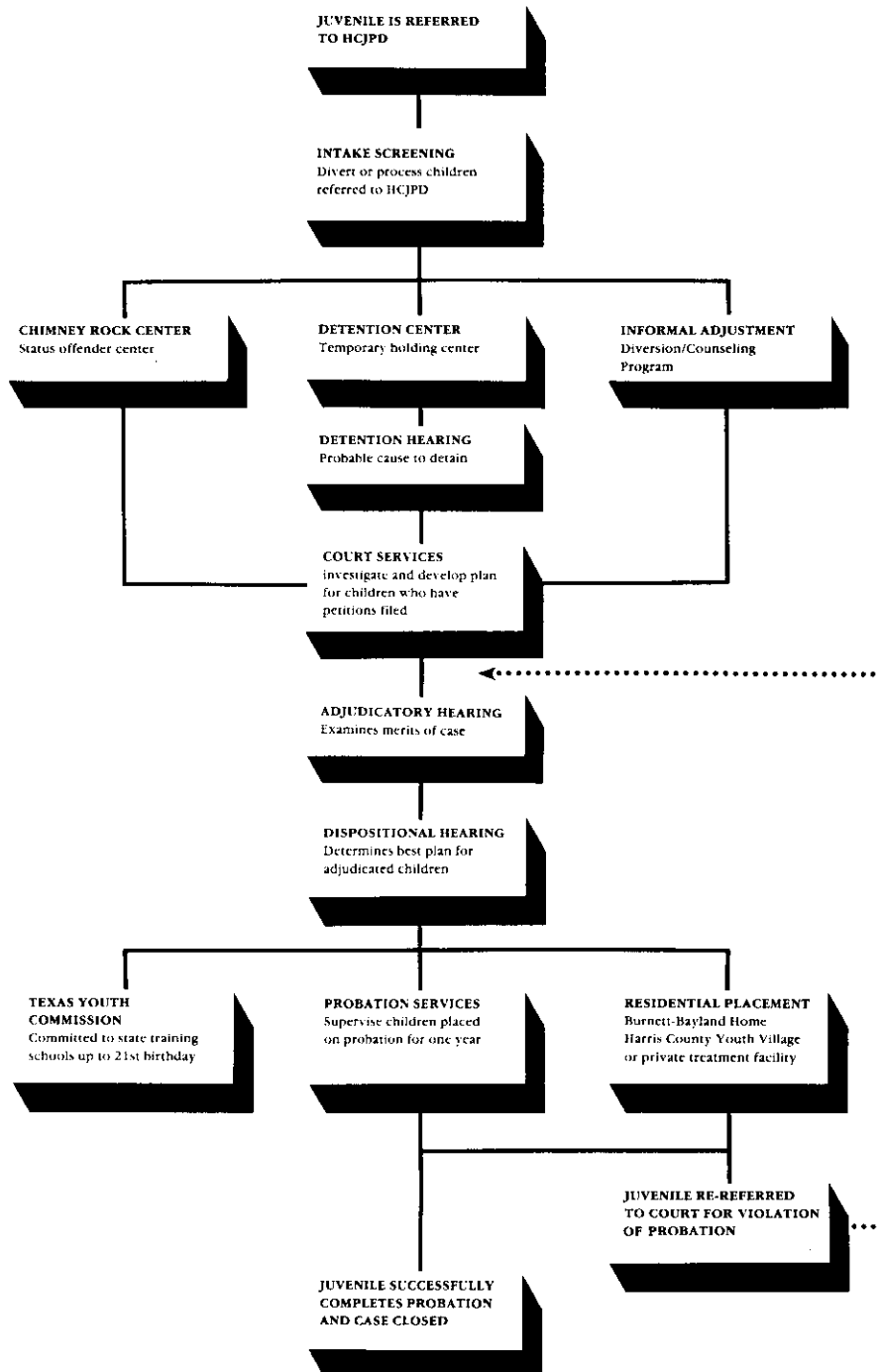
Working with young offenders takes determined patience and a belief in the potential of every child. Despite our best efforts, we know that today’s drop-out will not likely be tomorrow’s class valedictorian. We just don’t get many giant miracles around here.

But every day we get children off the streets and back into school. We provide tutors to help them catch up. We start young drug abusers on the road to recovery and teach parents and children to communicate again. Every day we see troubled children take the first giant steps toward a better future.

Tiny miracles, that’s what this work is all about.”

John A. Cocoros,
Chief Probation Officer

Case Flow Chart



Harris County Commissioners' Court

The Harris County Commissioners' Court is a five-member elected body responsible for the general administration of county business. As a county agency, the Juvenile Probation Department receives most of its annual budget from the Commissioners' Court. In 1987, \$17,721,525 was allocated for staff salaries, children's programs, residential child care and other operating expenses.

The Commissioners' Court also determines county personnel regulations and sets operational guidelines followed by the Department. Each year, the Department continues to receive the support from the Commissioners' Court which enables us to serve this community's troubled youth and their families.



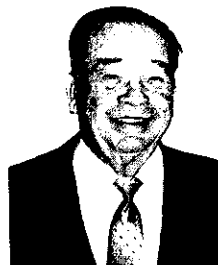
Jon Lindsay
Harris County Judge



Bob Eckels
Commissioner
Precinct Three



El Franco Lee
Commissioner
Precinct One



E. A. "Squatty" Lyons, Jr.
Commissioner
Precinct Four



Jim Fonteno
Commissioner
Precinct Two

Harris County Juvenile Board

The Harris County Juvenile Board is the governing body of the Juvenile Probation Department. As mandated by state statute, the Juvenile Board monitors all programs, institutional services and residential placement facilities. The Board also sets administrative policies and approves the Department's annual budget prior to submission to the Commissioners' Court.

Several important tasks of the Juvenile Board in 1987 included its active support to transfer the Child Support Office from the Board's authority to that of the Commissioners' Court. The transfer was effective October 1, 1987.

The Board also applied to the American Correctional Association for accreditation of the Juvenile Detention Center. This procedure will give official certification of the Center's high standards of performance and service.

Through Board action, the Juvenile Detention Center acquired a self-paced, audio-visual learning program. This computerized program will provide remedial education for many children.

Recognizing the need for citizen participation in the juvenile justice system, the Juvenile Board established an Advisory Committee, appointing Houston attorney Joe Bart as chairman and first member.



Judge Jon Lindsay
County Judge
Chairman



Judge Robert L. Lowry
313th District Court
Vice Chairman
Program Committee
Personnel Committee
Tri-Board Committee



Judge Robert B. Baum
314th District Court
Board Secretary
Program Committee
Tri-Board Committee
Budget and Finance Committee



Judge Bill Elliott
311th District Court



Judge William M. Hatten
176th District Court
Building and Grounds Committee

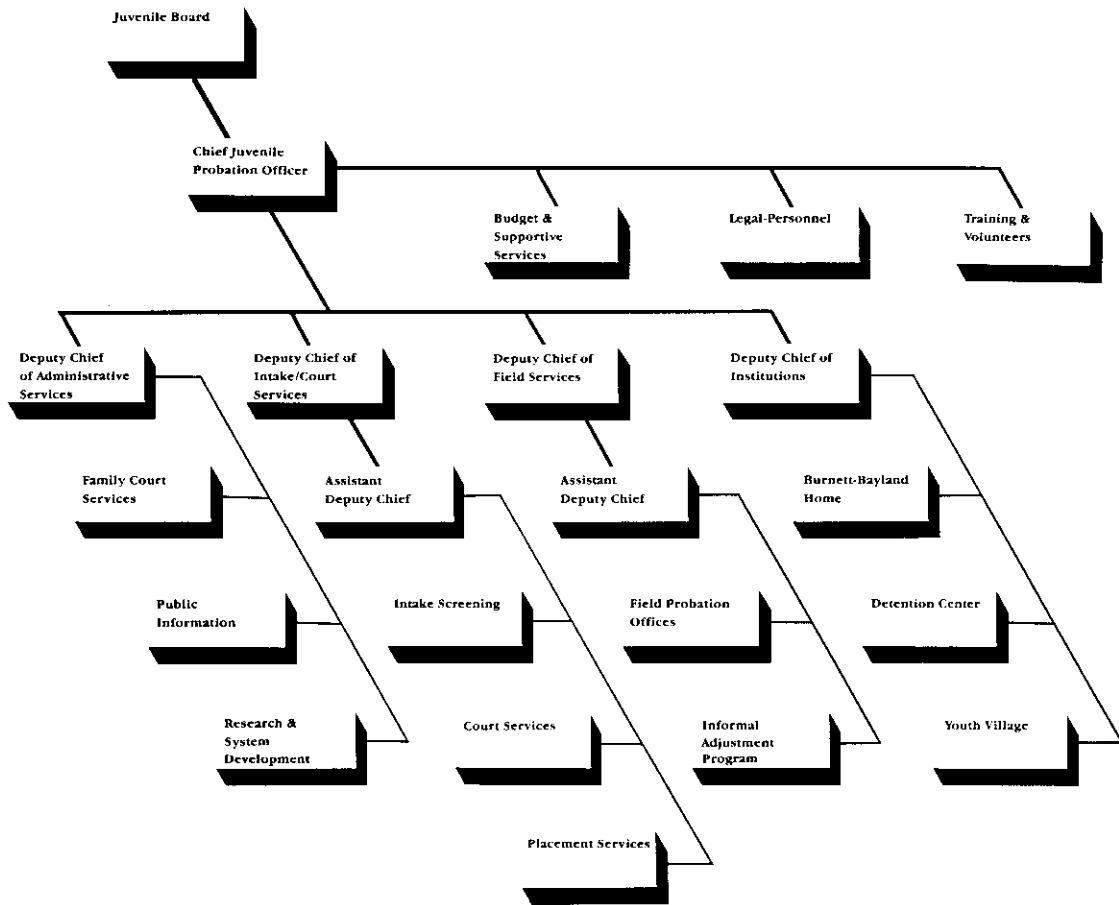


Judge Wyatt H. Heard
190th District Court



Judge Eric Andell
315th District Court
Program Committee

Organization Chart 1987



The Agency Structure

The Harris County Juvenile Probation Department is organized into four functional divisions: Administrative Services, Intake Court Services, Probation Field Services and Institutions. Each division is headed by a deputy chief. These divisions are supported by the Department's wide range of ancillary services and resources.

The Chief Juvenile Probation Officer administers all operations of the Department. The Department operates within the provisions of the Texas Family Code and under the authority of its governing body, the Harris County Juvenile Board.

The Department is accountable to and follows the guidelines of its primary funding sources: the Harris County Commissioners' Court, the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's office.

Funding

The Department receives funding from three sources: Harris County Commissioners' Court, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office.

Most of the Department's \$17,721,525 budget is from the Commissioners' Court which allocated \$16,647,238 for direct client services, private placements, residential services, staff salaries and operating expenses.

The Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, a state agency, allocated \$1,053,957 to the Department for client services, staff training and personnel.

Additional funds came from the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office in a \$369,506 Purchase of Services grant for private placements, counseling and other service contracts. A Detention Center Staffing Grant of \$72,456 provided partial funding for staff positions in the Center.

Intake Court Services Division

The Intake Court Services Division handles all the Department's incoming cases from initial referral through completion of court proceedings. The Division is divided into three functional units: Intake Screening, Court Services and Placement Services.

Intake Screening

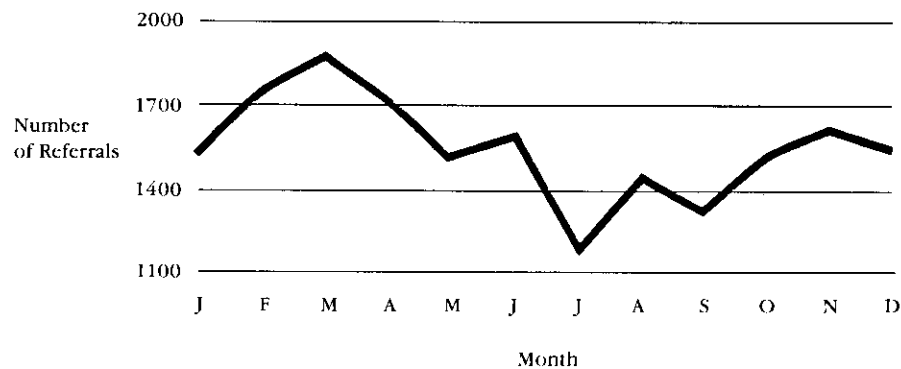
Two intake screening units operate around the clock to receive and review incoming cases. Status offenses* (primarily runaway and truancy) and all class C misdemeanors are handled at Chimney Rock Center; others are processed at the Juvenile Detention Center.

The pending offense, home and school situation, past history, and the child's legal, physical and emotional status are evaluated to determine where he will stay until his courtheating.

Many children are diverted from the juvenile justice system at this point. Specially trained diversion officers identify those who can be returned home safely and, in 1987, diverted 544 children from unnecessary detention.

*Acts which are illegal only when committed by juveniles.

Number of Referrals
by Month, 1987

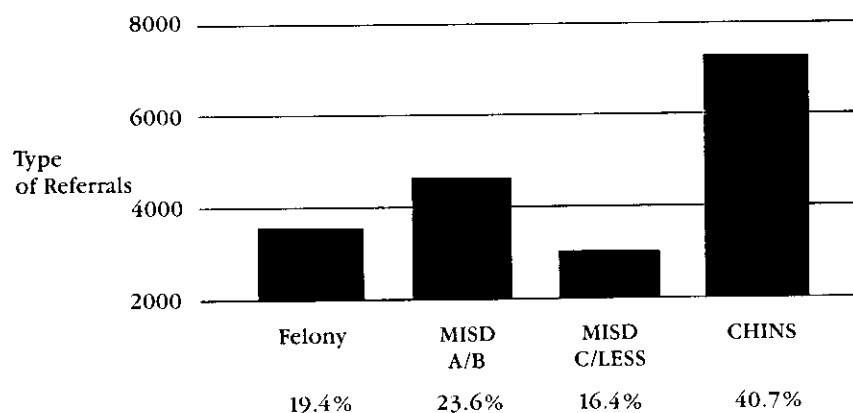


Offense Per Referral, 1985-1987

	1985	1986	1987
Murder	23	16	18
Arson	55	73	98
Assault			
Felony	180	190	207
Misd A/B	57	60	82
Misd C	652	677	730
Sexual Assault	101	115	121
Robbery	209	241	223
Burglary	1674	1813	1617
Theft			
Felony	195	187	148
Misd A/B	1555	1671	1755
Misd C	1075	1168	1090
Auto Theft	269	306	247
Joyriding	200	243	276
Drugs			
Felony	96	89	111
Misd A/B	645	506	419
Misd C	653	732	521
Inhalants	120	141	77
Alcohol Misd C	30	37	31
Other			
Felony	475	447	439
Misd A/B	1927	2043	1914
Disorderly Conduct	119	157	126
City Ordinance	200	198	118
Violation of Probation	351	372	448
Runaway* (CHINS)	6016	7182	6334
Other* (CHINS) Offense	872	1409	1025
TYC Runaways	263	272	242
Administrative Actions	749	701	649
 TOTAL	 18761	 21046	 19066

*Children in need of supervision

Type of Referrals, 1987

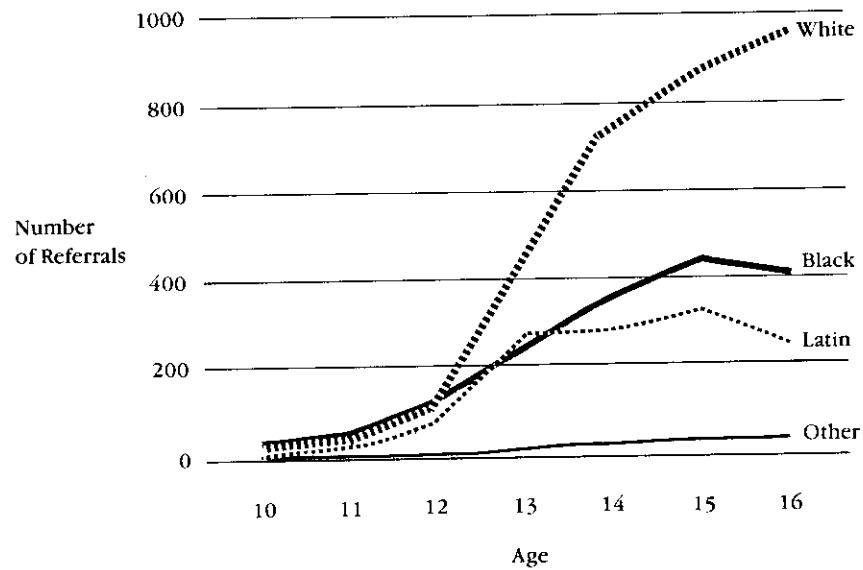


Referral Source, 1987

Baytown Police Department	583
Harris County Sheriff's Department	2525
Houston Police Department	11776
Pasadena Police Department	568
Other	3614
TOTAL	19066

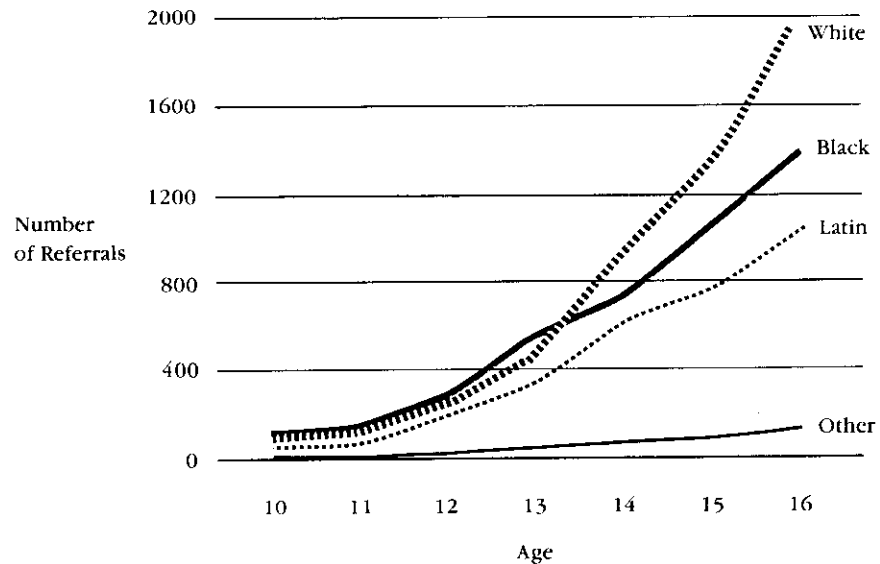
Referral by Age and Ethnicity, 1987

Females



Referral by Age and Ethnicity, 1987

Males



Referrals by School District and Ethnicity, 1987

	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
Aldine	305	152	505	30	992
Alief	211	57	462	56	786
Channelview	10	13	82	0	105
Clear Creek	23	19	230	6	278
Crosby	14	5	41	0	60
Cypress-Fairbanks	42	53	476	22	593
Deer Park	1	16	213	0	230
Galena Park	40	62	174	1	277
Goose Creek	109	137	344	3	593
Houston	3523	2593	1452	74	7642
Huffman	2	1	42	0	45
Humble	18	7	247	4	276
Katy	12	12	176	5	205
Klein	51	17	331	14	413
LaPorte	15	13	249	0	277
North Forest	389	22	29	0	440
Pasadena	61	262	608	22	953
Sheldon	15	8	55	0	78
Spring	35	24	255	11	325
Spring Branch	160	140	432	33	765
Tomball	6	4	55	0	65
Stafford	0	0	0	0	0
Waller	0	0	6	0	6
Private/Parochial	86	86	263	8	443
Out of County	180	104	387	9	680
Not Available	656	589	1258	36	2539
TOTAL	5964	4396	8372	334	19066

Court Services

Three courts hear all cases of delinquency in Harris County. They are the 313th, 314th and 315th District Courts.

When a petition is filed by the District Attorney and a child's court date is set, the Court Services Unit is notified. The court services officer prepares a comprehensive evaluation of the child and his circumstances for the judge. Psychological, medical and other special assessments may be included.

Court Activity, 1987

Disposition	
Probation	1497
Probation/Restitution	299
Informal Adjustment	178
Committed to Texas Youth Commission	356
Certified to Criminal Court	13
Passed—Writ Issued	75
Passed	158
Non-Suit	468
Dismissed	21
Incentive Completed	59
Other	627
TOTAL	3751



“Because of my job, I am teaching my own sons to think of the consequences of everything they do. Several boys I worked with continue to call me. I consider them extra sons. I tell them, ‘I’ll be here for you forever’.”

Terri Hetzel, Intake Screening Officer

MHMRA Activity, 1987

Referrals	571
Psychologicals	382
Family	91
Psychiatric	225

Placement Services

When the court is likely to consider removing a child from his home, the Placement Services Unit develops a list of appropriate residential institutions for the judge to review. The unit maintains a current list of facilities approved by the Juvenile Board and assists with arrangements for admittance when requested.

Placement Activity, 1987

Facility	Number of Youth
Burnett-Bayland Home	90
Cullen Bayou Place	1
Carl Farley's Boys Ranch	1
Casa Phoenix	1
Gulf Coast Trade Center	38
Houston Achievement Center	4
Harris County Youth Village	155
Hope Center for Youth	7
Houston Marine Institute	12
Latino Learning Center	2
Mary Lee Foundation	13
New Horizons	1
Nacogdoches Boys Ranch	7
Ranch Haven	1
Tejas Home for Youth	6
Vernon Drug Abuse Center	17
Westbranch Treatment Center	5
Youth Alternatives	5
TOTAL	366

Institutions Division

The Department operates three institutions: the Juvenile Detention Center, which is primarily a holding and diagnostic facility for children awaiting court; Burnett-Bayland Home, a residential facility with a community-based program; and Harris County Youth Village, a residential facility with complete on-campus programming.

Juvenile Detention Center

The Juvenile Detention Center is a secure, residential facility designed for short-term care. Here, a comprehensive range of diagnostic and therapeutic services is available around the clock. The Center won national recognition in 1987 when the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges named it the most outstanding detention center in the nation.

The program provides medical, dental, psychological, educational and recreational services. Short-term counseling and crisis intervention are the mainstays of the treatment approach.

Offense Per Admission, 1985-1987

	1985	1986	1987
Murder	24	17	18
Arson	27	20	18
Assault			
Felony	121	130	125
Misd A/B	24	24	36
Misd C	169	186	147
Sexual Assault	66	76	60
Robbery	147	173	161
Burglary	875	974	732
Theft			
Felony	101	106	77
Misd A/B	514	531	452
Misd C	119	91	63
Auto Theft	195	219	134
Joyriding	119	178	174
Drugs			
Felony	72	54	59
Misd A/B	271	202	140
Misd C	174	183	96
Inhalants	49	70	22
Alcohol Misd C	16	13	8
Other			
Felony	191	211	161
Misd A/B	717	778	617
Disorderly Conduct	65	104	67
City Ordinance	40	41	29
Violation of Probation	172	185	209
Runaway* (CHINS)	578	494	490
Other* (CHINS) Offense	40	34	12
TYC Runaways	200	186	154
Administrative Actions	372	225	165
 TOTAL	 5458	 5505	 4426

*Children in need of supervision (status offense)



"I wish every parent could work here for a day. After my first day on the job, I went home, woke up my sleeping boys and hugged and kissed them."

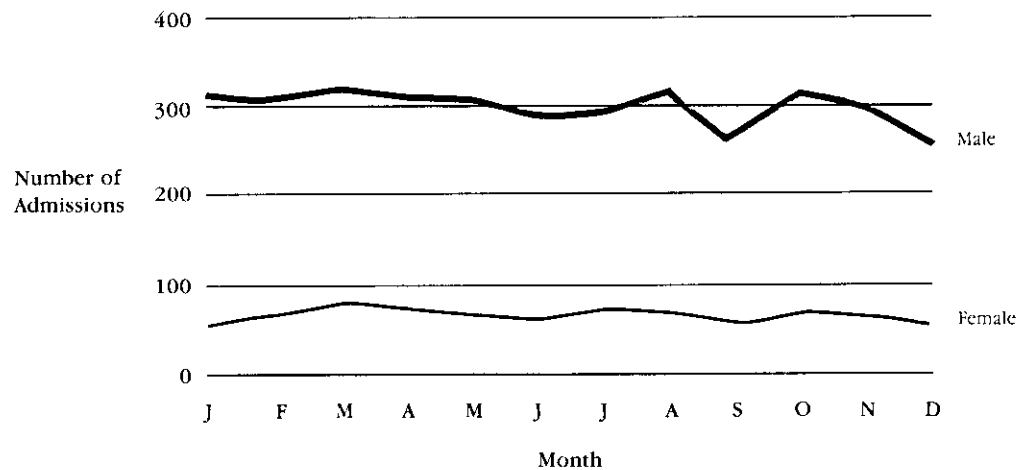
Rhome Nixon, Detention Child Care Worker

The facility features three gymnasiums, 13 group activity rooms, a clinic, courtroom, counseling and visitation areas, an assessment unit and separate intake section.

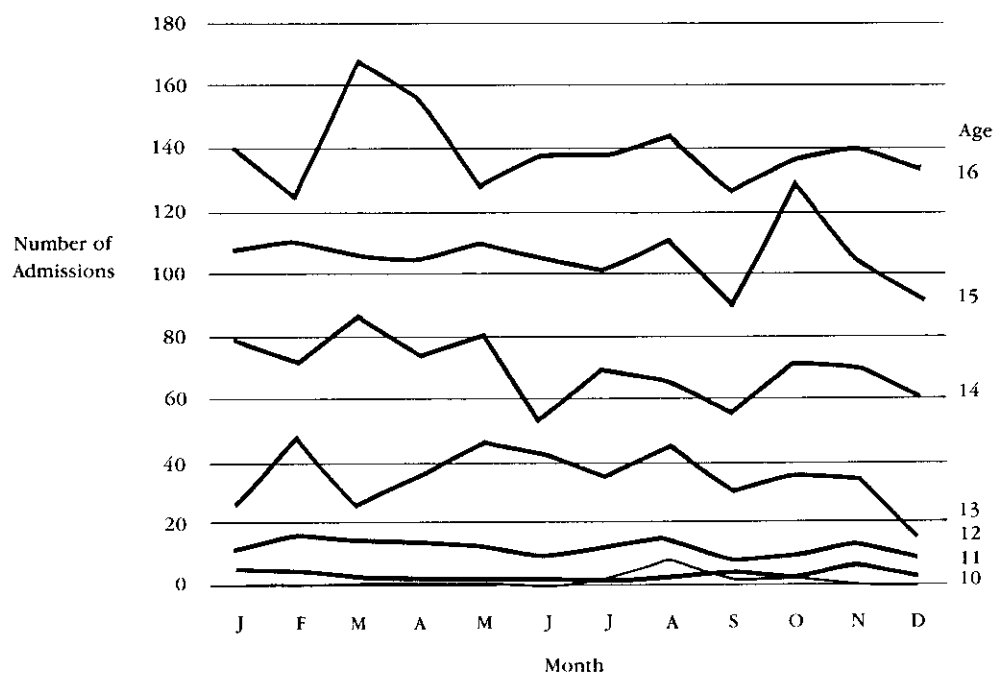
A low staff-to-child ratio, electronic monitoring systems and innovative architecture provide safety and security in a non-threatening, comfortable environment.

In 1987, there were 4,426 children admitted to the Center.

Admission to Detention
by Month and Sex, 1987



Admission to Detention
by Month and Age, 1987





“As I drive the kids to school each day, we talk. I let them know I’m pulling for them.”

Charles Northey, Burnett-Bayland Transportation Officer

Burnett-Bayland Home

Burnett-Bayland Home is a community-based residential center for delinquent children. The average length of stay in 1987 was 7.4 months.

Community involvement is vital to the program. Children attend public school, participate in extracurricular activities and enjoy off-campus privileges. Local organizations and citizen volunteers are actively involved in the child’s daily routine. Tutoring, counseling, recreation and education are aimed at developing responsible behavior and positive achievement.

Family participation in the child’s treatment plan includes family counseling, monthly parent education groups and regular visitation. By facilitating positive behavioral change in the child and by strengthening the family, the staff at Burnett-Bayland hopes to provide for a successful transition when the child returns home.

In 1987, 128 boys lived at Burnett-Bayland. They were 30% white, 44% black and 26% Hispanic.

Harris County Youth Village

The Youth Village is a residential child-care facility for delinquent children who need a restricted environment. They stay here for up to one year on order of the court.

The comprehensive educational, behavioral and therapeutic program includes recreation and social activities designed to teach children the personal and social skills needed to succeed in a law-abiding society.

The Houston Independent School District operates an on-campus school with a full curriculum of academic and vocational classes, athletics, guidance and counseling and remedial education. School attendance is mandatory and coursework is accelerated. Most children who enter the Youth Village have serious academic deficits. Many of them gain over one grade level during their stay.

During 1987, the Youth Village served 260 children. The population was 41% black, 23% white and 36% Hispanic. The sex ratio was 77% male and 23% female.



"Kids on probation can expect to see me at their school every week, even if it is just for ten minutes. They know I'm in touch with their teachers and expect them to attend and do well."

Robert Irizarry, Field Probation Officer

Probation Field Services Division

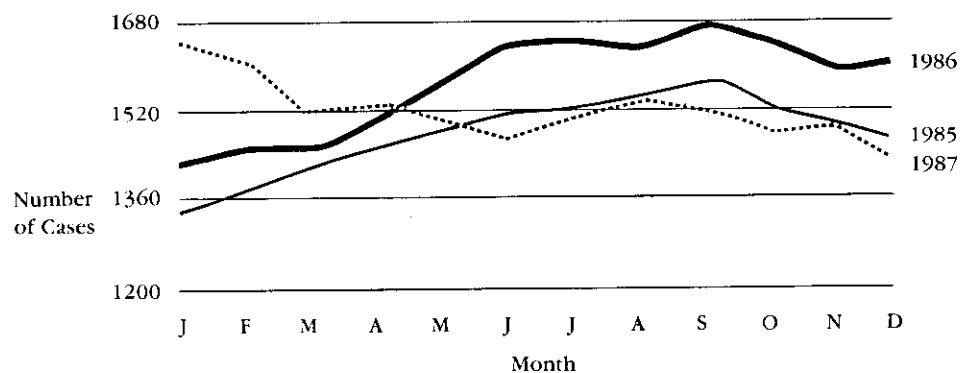
The Probation Field Services Division provides probation supervision and rehabilitative services to children and their families. Six offices conveniently located throughout Harris County offer a wide variety of programs and resources for young probationers. The Department's Informal Adjustment Program is also administered by this division.

Field Services

Field Services units provide up to one year of court-ordered supervision and service to delinquent children. Therapy, counseling, education and other programs may be included in each child's casework plan. Community organizations and volunteers are enlisted to assist with the probation officer's rehabilitative goals.

In 1987, a total of 1,283 new probation cases was assigned. Probation officers had an average caseload of 52.

Probation Case Load
Supervision by Month,
1985-1987



Informal Adjustment

The Informal Adjustment program diverts children from the court system through six months of supervision, counseling and education. The intent is to spare the child a juvenile record and prevent future law violations. In 1987, 635 children participated in the Informal Adjustment program.

1987 Field Services Programs

Program	Description	Participant
Educational Workshops	Workshops for youths and families on parenting, drug abuse, and self-esteem	6,476 youths and families
Y.E.E.S.	Tutorial, remedial, pre-employment training and G.E.D. preparation	507 youths
Therapeutic Counseling	By Houston Child Guidance, Hope Center, C.F.E., Association for the Advancement of Mexican-Americans (AAMA), Jackson and Associates, Indochinese Culture Center	314 individual, 351 group and 318.5 family hours
Legal Awareness Workshop (L.A.W.)	Attorneys, judges, and other professionals present information on the law	32 sessions, 95-110 youths and parents average per session
Peer Pressure Workshop	Presentation by Houston Police Department on negative effects of peer pressure	223 youths and parents
Parent Training	AAMA provides bilingual counselors for workshops and parenting skills.	424 attendance
R.O.P.E.S.	Problem-solving experience through physically and emotionally demanding activities by West Oaks Hospital	307 youths
Vision Screening Program	University of Houston provided screening for vision impairment; glasses provided	506 youths screened, 170 follow-up exams, 101 pairs glasses issued
Restitution (Community Services)	American Red Cross places youths in non-profit agencies as volunteers	263 youths, 8976 hours of service
Restitution (Financial)	Offender repays victim	289 court ordered totaling \$101,324.64
Prohibited Weapons Workshop	Houston Police Department teaches consequences of unlawful weapons.	136 youths and parents
Incentive Program	A voluntary program that may shorten probationary period	202 youths
TDC Outreach-Central Unit at Sugarland	Texas Department of Corrections shows harsh realities of prison life.	97 youths
Inhalant Abuse	Therapy and education for substance abusers and families with AAMA and Chicano Family Center	146 youths and family members
Boys Club of America	Educational and recreational activities	17 youths enrolled
Other Programs	Art therapy workshops, silk screening	70 youths



“I remember a little five-year-old girl who asked me, ‘Why don’t my parents come to see me anymore?’ I told her I didn’t know why but I was sure it wasn’t her fault. She hugged me.”

Tim Broussard, Family Court Services

Administrative Services Division

The Administrative Services Division administers the Department’s Research and Systems Development Unit and Family Court Services.

This Division also serves as liaison with the Harris County Commissioners’ Court, the State Legislature and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. The Public Information Office, responsible for community and media relations, is also part of this Division.

Family Court Services

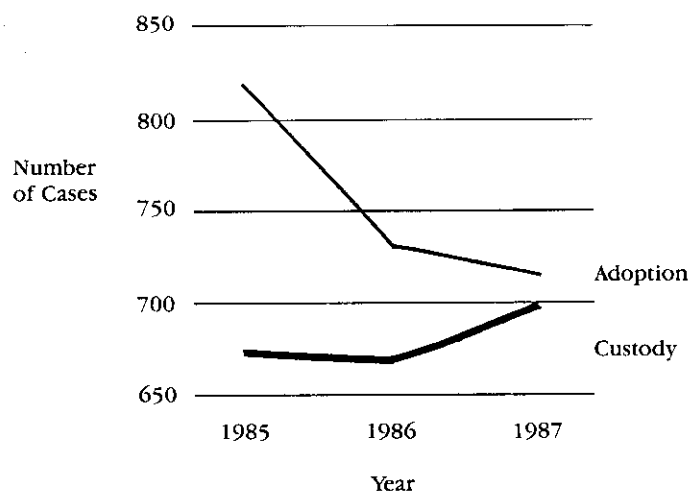
Family Court Services investigates and prepares social histories in adoption and disputed child custody cases for the district courts.

Cases are first screened by the Intake Unit, then assigned to a court investigator to prepare a comprehensive court report. Information from home visits, school contacts, relatives and other relevant sources assists the judge in making crucial child custody and adoption decisions.

Occasionally, it is in the best interest of the child to stay outside the home during the judicial process. In 1987, 38 children were temporarily placed in a residential facility.

In 1987, 700 child custody cases and 714 adoption cases were investigated.

Family Court Services
Cases Referred
1985-1987





“All the information about a child starts in our unit and ends here. Even though I don’t work with the children directly, the numbers tell me how much is done to help them and their families.”

Marilyn Davis, Research and Systems Development

Research and Systems Development

The primary goal of the Research and Systems Development Unit is to provide accurate and useful information to Department staff.

This unit is the central data source for automated and manual juvenile records. Information for tracking the activity of each case is set up in the county’s mainframe computer. Systems Development staff trains employees throughout the Department to update case information and works closely with county programmers to enhance the system.

Research staff provides data on the children and services of the Department, prepares statistical reports and graphics, prepares and monitors the Department’s grants, and trains staff on the word processing system.

Since 1986, Research and Systems Development has assisted in the design and implementation of microcomputer systems in areas of the Department not supported by the child tracking system. The unit provides programming, technical assistance and support services for 15 micro-systems throughout the Department.

Ancillary Services

Several units in the Department report directly to the Chief and provide support and resources to all divisions.

Budget and Supportive Services

This unit is responsible for the overall fiscal operation of the Department. Preparation and monitoring of the annual budget and management of all receipts and expenditures is a major function of this unit. The employee payroll, group insurance, staff identification, office inventories, general supplies, mail systems, print shop and building and grounds maintenance are also handled by this unit.

Legal and Personnel Services

Under the direction of the Agency Attorney, this unit offers assistance to all areas of the Department. Legal issues, court cases, contracts and grants are just some of the monitoring functions of this unit. This unit also acts as liaison with the offices of the County Attorney and District Attorney.

The Legal Screening Unit, staffed by prosecutors for the District Attorney’s Office, determines probable cause on cases referred by Intake. In 1987, 3,751 cases were reviewed resulting in 3,191 petitions filed or reopened in the District Courts.



■ **“The kids I work with will be friends even after the case is closed. They draw me a lot of pictures as gifts; that tells me a lot about their lives. I look at my volunteer job as a long-term thing.”**

Rusty Rockwell, Volunteer

The Personnel Unit processes all employment applications, organizes and oversees applicant screening, maintains all personnel records and ensures adherence to county personnel guidelines.

Volunteers

Volunteers contribute invaluable support to the Department. More than 500 citizen volunteers provided over 30,000 hours of service to our children and families last year.

Two volunteer organizations have been affiliated with the Probation Department for many years:

Juvenile Court Volunteers, Inc., a United Way agency, offices in the Department's administration building. It provides one-to-one counseling, tutoring, supervised field trips, educational workshops and recreational activities. These volunteers make holidays brighter for detained children with parties and special events. Last year, 234 Juvenile Court Volunteers provided 27,000 hours of service.

Junior League of Houston has provided volunteers to the Department since 1968. In 1987, 5,910 volunteer hours were donated by League members. Primarily in the Intake Unit, they work with children and families, discussing consequences of delinquent behavior and evaluating their current circumstances. In 1987, 942 children benefited from contact with a Junior League volunteer.

All volunteers with the Department are carefully screened and intensively trained. They offer the extra dimension of community commitment and personal attention so crucial to our success.

Training and Staff Development

The Training and Staff Development Unit provides in-service training to improve professional skills and meet the state-required 40 hours of training per year for all certified probation officers and child care workers. It also offers educational programs for children and families.

Educational workshops improve skills and update staff on juvenile justice research, trends and knowledge. In 1987, 158 training sessions included

family therapy, computer training, management techniques, youth suicide, juvenile law, immigration procedures and chemical abuse.

A new training program, PEAKS (Physical and Environmental Activities for Knowledge and Skills), enabled staff and children to learn more about themselves through group problem solving and team work. The Juvenile Alcohol Awareness Program, designed and initiated in this unit, now operates in cities across the country. In 1987, 292 Harris County children completed this six-week educational course.

Student Interns

During 1987, twelve Texas colleges and universities participated in the Department's Intern Program, offering on-the-job training for undergraduate and graduate students.

In 1987, our 54 interns came from Grambling State University, Houston Baptist University, Lamar University, Sam Houston State University, Southern Methodist University, Southwest Texas State University, Stephen F. Austin University, Texas Southern University, Texas Women's University, University of Houston System and University of St. Thomas.

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